

ABAC Meeting Minutes for December 3, 2007

Board members present were Jack Johnson, Stephan Miller, Ron Sender, Christopher Tonkin, Ted Packard, and Scott Smith. Doug Greenfield was also present.

The meeting was called to order at 7:31

*The minutes from the November meeting were approved with one correction.

Update on Minuteman Bikeway banners in Arlington Center. Joey is meeting with a sign vendor tomorrow to get advice on how the banners should be constructed and how they could look. We would like to put some text on the back of the banners such as the URL for the Minuteman Bikeway and perhaps directions to the paths continuation on the other side of the intersection. Jack will also attend the meeting. Jack said that ABAC might be able to pay for the banners using some of our grant money. We are targeting the spring for completion of this project.

Update on planning for the ABAC Winter Social. Jack asked us to consider rescheduling the date for this year's social. He suggested March 13 and would prefer that date. We decided to try it this year and see how it works out. This postponement will also give us more time to plan. We have been discussing a bike-commuting theme for this year. Scott suggested an interactive discussion on bike commuting with Nicole Friedman, the new bicycle coordinator for the City of Boston. We could also hear about the Mass Pike Bike Tour. Scott would like to hear about plans for the Minuteman National Park bike trails.

We also discussed the possibility of talking about alternative kinds of bicycling, in other words, expanding our repertoire of interests. We could have a workshop on reducing the number of car trips we all take every day. We might also point out the new bicycle racks on buses.

Discussion of future bike-rack sites (related to state grant funding). Jack told us the MAPC might fund another wave of bicycle racks next year. We will be looking especially at the business districts in town. We discussed the virtues of the post and ring versus the inverted U designs. A site that we have been discussing for some time is the Mass Ave. and Library Way intersection. We digressed into dreaming about reengineering this intersection. Another long discussed site is Broadway Plaza and several others in the Heights business district. Ron suggested that Brattle Square could use some bike parking.

Doug suggested the wide sidewalk in front of the Arlington Yoga Center. We thought we should make it a priority to put some racks along Mass Ave. where sidewalk space is tight to set a precedent for parking in these areas. Scott asked about the relative cost of the inverted U versus the post and ring style. Jack thought that the cost of the two systems is similar and told us that we should have a final site list by the next meeting.

Discussion of Arlington's potential as a "bicycle friendly community," related to the criteria of Engineering, Education, Encouragement, Enforcement, and Evaluation. Doug asked what are the benefits to the town of achieving bike friendly status? Jack answered that the process itself infiltrates and educates the town government. Doug's next question was if this process could be done informally—that is, without actually applying for the official title? We discussed the pros and cons of this approach.

For Engineering, we felt that the bike path is a tremendous resource and factor in our favor. We are also pushing for bike lanes, improved road design, and bike-responsive traffic lights. We have also worked on passing a bicycle parking bylaw and improving road maintenance DPW responsiveness. The negatives include a hilly terrain, no bike lanes yet, gaps in bike parking, and the bike-path crossing in Arlington Center.

For Education, the elementary schools discourage bicycling but we have community sponsored bike classes. The police sponsor a bike rodeo every year and we have a booth at Town day. The police lack resources to be on bikes themselves or further encourage cycling.

For encouragement, we don't have problems with misguided citations given to cyclists. But on the other hand, law breaking cyclists are not cited. There is currently little interaction between ABAC and the police.

Evaluation and Planning. We really have no adequate crash data and no bike plan or other systematic planning and evaluation. Jack would like us to decide whether we want to make a formal application. There are a lot of gaps to fill. We decided to try and develop a project for each category. We will discuss this further at the next meeting.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:28.

*Denotes a vote was taken.

Minutes submitted by Stephan